

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Let me just say, in response to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, this isn't the best process. I appreciate having a couple of days and being able to come to the floor. The problem is, under what was proposed by the chairman, we would have had more time, yes, but we wouldn't have had the ability to challenge individual earmarks. So that was a trade-off that we were unwilling to make. And I still maintain that we made the best decision here. But I think it would be nice to have more than a couple of days to actually look at these, but I appreciate that the Appropriations Committee is doing so.

This amendment would prohibit \$250,000 in Federal funds from going to the Walter Clore Wine and Culinary Center in Prosser, Washington, and reduce the cost of the bill by a consistent amount.

I'm sure people like to be wine and dined, but I think this earmark goes a little too far. I think that this is another example of, if we can justify economic development here, then we can justify just about anything.

We often complain that the Federal Government, the agencies spend willy-nilly, they're wasting money here, they're wasting money there. They are, certainly. One amendment that I wanted to bring today but got it too late would be one to simply cut the account that provides economic development earmarks because I think the Federal agencies do waste money in this regard. But instead of reining that account in and saying you shouldn't be doing that, we're kind of competing with them and saying we're going to do our own economic development earmarks. I just fail to see a Federal nexus that exists here that wouldn't exist with other organizations.

You can justify anything in terms of economic development. The act of spending money by itself inherently means there is economic development. But where do we choose? Do we just choose this one or that one? It just doesn't seem to be a very good process, particularly without a real Federal nexus here.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

I think the gentleman, in his opening remarks, said something that currently should be expanded. Current law within HUD has an Office of Economic Development, and its responsibility, and I want to quote what its responsibility is, it "works with public and private sectors as well as not-for-profit organizations to provide financial and technical assistance to local communities to develop and implement their

own economic development and community revitalization strategies." Now, that's current law. If the gentleman believes that that agency shouldn't exist, then certainly he can introduce a bill, and we can have a worthy debate on that. But that is existing law.

And it is within that context, then, as this relates to my district, which is a very diverse agriculture area, labor intensive in many of the specialty crops, but there is a new industry that is emerging in my district, and that is the wine industry. It's only about 35 years old. Historically, the wine industry in this country has always been in California. This is emerging in my district, and it has the benefit, then, of economic development to expand, to bring more tourists into this area, which means there's more hotels, more restaurants. That is the very definition of what economic development is all about.

So let me be very, very clear on this. This project is fully consistent with requirements for projects normally and routinely funded under this program and existing programs.

And I might add, it is named for an individual who has been widely recognized as the father of the Washington wine industry. He is the one who convinced farmers to transfer some of their lands to growing wine grapes. And, frankly, they've been very successful.

There has been \$5 million raised by other governmental agencies and quasi-governmental agencies to build this center. This is part of that. What it demonstrates to me is that there is a strong commitment of this wide community that identifies this as a local economic development project.

So while there has been a lot of discussion with the earmarks this year, and I suspect we will have more of those discussions, I firmly believe that within existing laws and within the context of economic development, this falls into a category that I feel very, very comfortable with in saying that we ought to earmark dollars for this center because it will expand the economic development in this largely rural area that I have the privilege of representing. So, to me, it is an example of what the economic development initiative is supposed to be.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Chairman, Washington wine industry revenues are estimated at about \$3 billion a year. The industry employs, I believe, about 11,000 people. Over 2 million people visit Washington wineries every year. That's just the point I was making. This is an industry that does pretty well. And I just wonder why the Federal taxpayer has to be involved here.

Public/private partnerships, there is nothing bad about that on its face; but not every public/private partnership is justified, particularly when that partner is the Federal Government. I just still fail to see a nexus.

And, again, we should actually be providing more oversight of the Federal agencies that expend these economic development grants because a lot of it is wasted. I'm sure a lot of it is wasted in my own district. But we shouldn't be trying to compete with that account by earmarking our own funds.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, let me restate again that it is existing law within HUD of this office that provides for economic development. I am simply following the law and exercising my right as a Member of Congress, who is part of the writing of the appropriation bills, to earmark what I think is important for my district.

Now, if the gentleman wants to, as I mentioned in my previous remarks, if he wants to have a debate on whether that office ought to exist, well, I think that is worthy of debate. In fact, I would have suggested to the gentleman that maybe he should have defunded completely the whole office; therefore, he could have been at least consistent rather than picking out one project that I think is worthy, following what the requirements are of the Economic Development Office.

So with that, I would urge my colleagues to oppose the Flake amendment as it relates to the Walter Clore Center.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FLAKE

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the Clerk will report the amendment.

There was no objection.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. FLAKE:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—None of the funds in this Act shall be available for the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in Wausau, Wisconsin.

(b) CORRESPONDING REDUCTION OF FUNDS.—The amount otherwise provided by this Act for "Department of Housing and Urban Development—Community Development Fund" (and specified for neighborhood initiatives) is hereby reduced by \$400,000.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Chairman, as mentioned, this amendment would strike \$400,000 in the bill from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.